



IAN AXFORD (NEW ZEALAND) FELLOWSHIPS IN PUBLIC POLICY

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

For Fellowships in New Zealand in 2027

PURPOSE

Established in 1995 by the New Zealand Government in partnership with the private sector to reinforce links between New Zealand and the United States, the Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy give outstanding American professionals opportunities to research, travel and gain practical experience in public policy in New Zealand, including first-hand knowledge of economic, social and political reforms and management of the government sector.

The Fellowships programme is named after prominent New Zealander Sir Ian Axford, an eminent astrophysicist and space scientist, who acted as Patron of the programme until his death in 2010.

The programme has three goals:

- to help improve the practice of public policy in New Zealand and the United States by the cross-fertilization of ideas and experience in the two countries;
- to reinforce New Zealand-United States links by enabling Americans of high intellectual ability and leadership potential to come to New Zealand to gain experience and build contacts in the field of public policy development; and
- to build a network of public policy experts on both sides of the Pacific, and encourage ongoing policy exchange between New Zealand and the United States.

THE PROGRAMME

The Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships programme is administered by Fulbright New Zealand on behalf of the Axford Fellowships Board. Fellowships are undertaken at a New Zealand government agency, not at a university. Fellowships are offered in all areas of public policy, however not all New Zealand Government agencies are able to host Fellows.

Each year the Axford Fellowship publishes a list of government priorities that would be of particular interest for potential Fellows to address. **It is recommended that all perspective applicants review this list (which is available on the Axford website) prior to submitting their application.**

The fellowship can be between three to five months in duration. Applicants should discuss a timeline preference with their potential host agency, but the Axford board will decide what length Fellowship they decide to offer selected Fellows.

Candidates should approach their application with a preferred duration in mind and understand, however, that flexibility may be required.

Regardless of length, the Fellowship will begin in February 2027. The actual and final decision on the length of the Fellowship will be determined in discussion with the host agency.

Candidates will work with the Fellowship Office (Fulbright NZ) to identify a suitable contact in the New Zealand organisation(s) they wish to be placed at prior to applying. This will give the organisation an opportunity to discuss ideas with the candidate and assess suitability and capacity prior to shortlisting. Final decisions on placement will be made by the Fellowships Office, after full consultation with Fellows, host organisations and the programme's expert advisors.

Successful candidates will be based at a New Zealand Government host organisation in Wellington. Fulbright New Zealand will work with the host organisation and the Fellow to finalise a suitable host agency mentor. The Fellow should utilise their US contacts and the assistance of their host organisation to source appropriate US academic mentors. A New Zealand academic mentor will be appointed in discussion with Victoria University of Wellington's School of Government and the host agency. The organisation of the Fellow's specific research project and fellowship programme will be left largely to the Fellow and their host organisation, with an orientation briefing and oversight by the Axford Fellowships Office in New Zealand (which is Fulbright New Zealand). When necessary, further consultation will be provided. In addition, Fellows will be expected to spend a substantial part of their time in contact with relevant organisations outside their host organisation to gain practical experience in their policy field in New Zealand.

At the conclusion of their Fellowships, before returning to the United States, Fellows are required to submit a policy report for publication by the Fellowships Office, and to participate in a report back seminar where they make an oral presentation to an invited audience and interested members of the public. A further written report evaluating their Fellowship experience in New Zealand must be submitted to the Fellowships Office and will, where appropriate, be shared with the Fellow's host organisation.

PROJECT CRITERIA

Attention will be paid to the quality of the suggested projects. A full description of the project is therefore an important part of the application. Criteria to be applied in evaluating each project include:

- the intention to combine thought, research, and practical experience;
- the candidate's grasp of the subject matter and issues;
- the relevance of the project to New Zealand and the value of pursuing this project in New Zealand;

- the relevance of the project to the United States and the candidate’s potential impact on return; and
- the feasibility of the proposal in the time available.

GOVERNMENT SPONSORS

The Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy programme is sponsored annually by many New Zealand Government and some non-government agencies*:

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| • Department of Internal Affairs | www.dia.govt.nz |
| • Ministry of Education | www.minedu.govt.nz |
| • Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade | www.mfat.govt.nz |
| • Ministry of Health | www.moh.govt.nz |
| • Ministry of Justice | www.justice.govt.nz |
| • Ministry of Social Development | www.msd.govt.nz |
| • Public Service Commission | www.publicservice.govt.nz |
| • Victoria University of Wellington
School of Government | www.victoria.ac.nz/sog |

*Note that not all sponsoring agencies are able to host Fellows.

ELIGIBILITY

Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy are open to mid-career professionals active in any part of the public, business or non-profit sectors. Axford Fellows are usually professionals working in agencies involved in public policy and policy implementation, and not normally those working in academia. Academics and faculty are instead encouraged to apply for Fulbright awards.

Candidates must show potential as leaders and opinion-formers in their fields. They must be interested in learning from their experiences in New Zealand and be capable of putting to effective use in the United States the policy lessons learned in New Zealand.

Applicants must be US citizens with a minimum of five years of experience in their professions and the focus of the Fellowships is on mid-career development. Applications are welcome regardless of gender, disability status, sexual orientation or ethnicity.

ENTITLEMENT

The award is not intended to match Fellows’ US salaries, but to cover the basic expenses of residence in New Zealand. Some Fellows may find it necessary to supplement the allowance from personal funds.

Financial entitlements for the Fellowship are based on information provided with your application and are determined at the time your application is received. Changes to these financial entitlements are not

possible unless a change in circumstances is likely to result in a lower entitlement. We will require a letter from your employer confirming their support for your participation in the Fellowship programme, and also confirming whether you will receive full, partial or no paid leave.

Fellows on **paid leave with full salary** will receive a living allowance of NZ\$1,500 per month on top of their salaries.

Those on **paid leave with partial salary** will receive an allowance of NZ\$2,500 per month on top of their salaries.

Those **unable to obtain paid leave** from their US employer will receive an allowance of NZ\$5,000 per month.

Where all other factors are equivalent, preference may be given to applicants with paid leave.

Regarding leave status, please note that the Fellowships are fully funded by the New Zealand government. Federal agency heads have broad discretionary authority regarding employee participation in training and developmental assignments. This can include time away from regular job duties with continued payment of salary as well as payment for certain travel expenses. Alternatively, employees may request leave (paid or unpaid) in the event that participation is not possible as a training/developmental assignment. Prospective applicants should refer to their agency's human resources policies. Since the Fellowships were established in 1996, approximately one third of Fellows have come from Federal agencies, many with salary support.

Fellows are not liable for income tax in New Zealand but are strongly advised to check their liability for US income tax payable on their fellowship income. The US Internal Revenue Service does not treat fellowship income as tax exempt.

Fellows are expected to provide their own health and travel insurance cover.

Travel

Travel is provided for basic economy class flights from the Fellow's home in the US to New Zealand (and back) for the Fellow.

Dependent entitlement

Fellows with dependents (regardless of how many) will receive a dependent allowance of NZ\$500 per month. Additionally, a maximum contribution of NZ\$3,000 will be contributed toward dependents flights.

FELLOWSHIP CONDITIONS

Final approval of all Fellowship awards is conditional upon meeting normal New Zealand immigration requirements, possession of a valid US passport and New Zealand work visa, a satisfactory medical examination, having arrangements approved by the Fellowships Office for length of tenure, and on arranging an appropriate programme and placement in New Zealand.

While on tenure, Fellows may not perform services for an employer from whom they are on paid or unpaid leave of absence.

It is a condition of appointment that Fellows may not seek permanent employment or residence in New Zealand for at least two years following their Fellowships.

INQUIRIES AND APPLICATION

The Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships programme is administered by Fulbright New Zealand on behalf of the Axford Fellowships Board.

Please direct any inquiries to the Programme Manager, Fulbright New Zealand:
Telephone +64 4 494 1506, Email fellowships@fulbright.org.nz

In order to apply, interested individuals must complete a formal application available to download from www.fulbright.org.nz, and a project proposal with accompanying CV and three references.

Candidates should show that their proposed project will inform policy in New Zealand and the United States and contribute something of value to their policy field.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 10am Tuesday 21 April 2026 (New Zealand Time).

Completed applications should be **emailed** to fellowships@fulbright.org.nz

In fairness to all candidates, applications received after the application deadline will not be eligible for consideration in the Fellowships cycle. No discussion will be entered into on unsuccessful applications.

SELECTION PROCESS

After a review of the applications submitted, a shortlist of applicants will be invited for interview with the Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy US Selection Committee, which will take place in Washington D.C. (at the NZ Embassy). Travel expenses and accommodation costs will be paid for by the Fellowship. **Interviews will take place Thursday 4 and Friday 5 June 2026. Applicants are advised to keep these dates available in case they are invited to interview.** Interviews are unable to take place at an alternative date.

The US Selection Committee includes a representative of the New Zealand Embassy, a representative of the Board of Trustees of the Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy, an Ian Axford Fellowships alumnus/ alumna, and Americans and New Zealanders known for their expertise in public policy and/or their knowledge of New Zealand.

Formal approval of Fellows will be given by the Board of Trustees of the Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy.

ADMINISTRATION

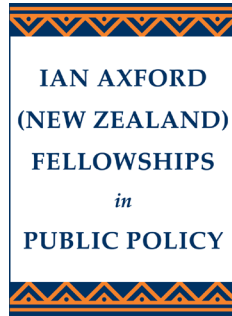
The Fellowships programme is overseen by the Board of Trustees of the Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy. This Board is chaired by former New Zealand Ambassador to the United States, Roy Ferguson. You can view our full Board of Trustees here: <https://axfordfellowships.org.nz/board-members/>.

The Fellowships programme is administered in New Zealand by Fulbright New Zealand which is based in Wellington. Established as the NZ-US Educational Foundation in 1948 under a treaty between the governments of the United States and New Zealand, Fulbright New Zealand is jointly funded by both governments to administer the Fulbright programme in New Zealand and to promote “the further strengthening of international cooperative relations.” . The programme is also well supported by the New Zealand Embassy in Washington, DC.

FELLOWSHIPS OFFICE

The Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy Office is the office of Fulbright New Zealand:

Post	PO Box 3465, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
Courier	Level 8, 120 Featherston Street, Wellington, New Zealand
Telephone	+64 4 494 1506
E-mail	fellowships@fulbright.org.nz
Website	https://axfordfellowships.org.nz/



SIR IAN AXFORD

Sir Ian served as the Patron for the Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy. He passed away in March 2010 in New Zealand.

An astrophysicist and space scientist, Sir Ian Axford followed New Zealand's most eminent scientist, Ernest, Lord Rutherford, the father of atomic and nuclear physics, in achieving international status.

Educated at the Universities of Canterbury in New Zealand and Manchester and Cambridge in England, he moved to the United States, first to Cornell University and then to the University of California at San Diego. He was closely involved in the planning of several space missions, notably the Voyager probes to the outer planets, and was awarded the John Adam Fleming Medal and became a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union in 1972. Sir Ian was elected a Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States in 1983. As President of the International Committee on Space Research, he presided over the first World Space Congress in Washington, DC in 1992.

From 1974 to 2004, Sir Ian was the Director of the Max Planck Institute of Aeronomy in Germany. From 1982 to 1985 he was Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, and has also been the Chairman of the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology and of the Marsden Fund for Basic Research in New Zealand.

A Fellow of the Royal Society of London, Member of the Academia Europaea, and Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand, he has also been awarded the Appleton Prize and the Chapman Medal (United Kingdom) and the Royal Society Gold Medal (New Zealand). He is a former President of the European Geophysical Society and was named "New Zealander of the Year" for 1995. His knighthood was conferred by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II in 1996.